

## Commonwealth's adoption benefit ranked first in the country

The Personnel Cabinet announced Oct. 7 that the state employee adoption benefit program is ranked first in the country by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Kentucky took the top spot in the government employer category, tied with the City of Carmel, Indiana on the 2015 best adoption-friendly workplaces list.

"It is Public Service Recognition Week here in the Commonwealth, and it's wonderful to be recognized again by the Dave Thomas Foundation for a great benefit available to state employees," said Personnel Cabinet secretary Dinah Bevington, whose agency oversees the program. "The adoption benefit provides help for state employees who wish to grow their family and provide a child with a forever home."



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The Commonwealth offers state employees up to \$3,000 per adoption and up to \$5,000 in financial reimbursement when adopting a child with special needs. The funds help parents with the direct fees and costs associated with the adoption. Adopting a child also grants state employees up to 12 weeks of family medical leave.

This year marks the ninth running of the Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces List, recognizing companies by the top 100, industry leaders and business size. The rankings, compiled from an annual survey of U.S. employers, are determined by an analysis of each company's adoption benefits, including the maximum financial reimbursement and the amount of paid leave provided for employees who adopt.

"Employers who offer adoption benefits understand that the initial needs of adoptive families are no different than families formed biologically – it helps ensure all families are treated equally by companies," said Rita Soronen, President and CEO of the Foundation. "We are elated to see even more companies in the last year implement adoption-friendly and foster care-friendly benefits."

The ninth annual Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces list also helps increase foster care adoption awareness while celebrating businesses that support adoptive families. There are more than 100,000 children in the U.S. foster care system waiting to be adopted. Every year, more than 20,000 children in foster care turn 18 and age out of the system without families.